

Proposal for Anti Bullying Taskforce:

State-wide Implementation of Resilience Triple P

**Prepared by Professor Matt Sanders and Dr Karyn Healy
Parenting and Family Support Centre, University of Queensland**

Nature of Issue:

School bullying is one of the top concerns for Queensland parents of children across a broad age range (2-16 years)¹. This strong parental concern is well founded. Large well-controlled longitudinal studies show that being bullied in primary school significantly increases risks of teenage depression and anxiety^{2,3}, psychosis⁴, and self-harm⁵. Efforts to reduce bullying have focussed almost exclusively on whole school interventions incorporating components of teaching curricula, improved discipline, social skills training, teacher education, peer assistance and counselling^{6,7}. Rigorous research shows that, although sometimes helpful, overall these programs are insufficient to protect students most at risk^{7,8}. One factor that differentiates effective from ineffective school bullying programs is the involvement of parents⁷. Until recently, the role of parents to supplement efforts of schools in protecting students against victimisation has been mainly overlooked.

Critical Role of Parenting:

A large body of research shows that parenting influences children's vulnerability to bullying. Parenting affects children's social competence⁹, with poor social skills being one of the strongest risk factors for victimisation¹⁰. Parenting also affects children's ability to regulate negative emotions¹¹, and can protect children against the emotional consequences of bullying¹². This is particularly important as the ability to regulate emotional responses to bullying is a strong risk factor for chronic victimisation for both passive¹³ and provocative¹⁴ (aggressive) victims. Recent research at the Parenting and Family Support Centre has defined a set of parenting practices called *facilitative parenting* that draws together strategies shown by previous research to support children's positive peer relationships¹⁵. Facilitative parenting is warm and responsive, includes coaching of social and emotional skills, and creates opportunities for children to strengthen their friendships. The level of facilitative parenting differentiates between children who are bullied from those who are not¹⁵, according to teacher reports, and protects children from both victimisation and depressive symptoms¹⁶.

What is Resilience Triple P?

Resilience Triple P is a cognitive behavioural family intervention that combines facilitative parenting training with social and emotional skills training for children¹⁷. It includes four sessions for parents and four sessions for children with their parents and siblings present. Parents' sessions focus on strategies to promote children's peer competence and positive peer relationships, and to communicate effectively with the school to seek help when needed. Children's sessions focus on skills to strengthen friendships, resolve conflict, interpret peer behaviour and respond to bullying and other behaviour they find upsetting.

Evidence of Effectiveness of Resilience Triple P

With the support of an ARC Discovery Grant, a randomised controlled trial of Resilience Triple P was conducted with children aged 6 years to 12 years, identified by their parents as having been bullied by peers. Compared to children from control families, children whose families received Resilience Triple P had lower levels of victimisation, distress about peer behavior, and depressive symptoms over time; teachers reported peers better accepted these children, and children reported liking school more over time¹⁸. Resilience Triple P is one of the few anti-bullying family-based interventions supporting victims validated through a randomized clinical trial.

Recommendation

Availability of Resilience Triple P to children whose parents report bullying is highly likely to enhance efforts of schools to protect these children and reduce ongoing risk of mental health problems. Other variants of the Triple P program are currently available free for Queensland parents through State Government support. We

recommend the Queensland Government provide additional funds to implement a statewide rollout of Resilience Triple P so that it can be offered to Queensland parents who report bullying of their primary school-aged child. The necessary resources for trainers, practitioners, parents and children are in publication and will be available for deployment at scale in the near future.

References

1. Queensland Parents' Survey (2018). Channel 7 and the Courier Mail (24 February, 2018)
2. Arseneault, L., Milne, B. L., Taylor, A., Adams, F., Delgado, K., Caspi, A., et al. (2008). Being bullied as an environmentally mediated contributing factor to children's internalizing problems: a study of twins discordant for victimization. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 162(2), 145-150.
3. Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F. I. M., Fredriks, A. M., Vogels, T., & Verloove-Vanhorick, S. P. (2006). Do bullied children get ill, or do ill children get bullied? A prospective cohort study on the relationship between bullying and health-related symptoms. *Pediatrics*, 117(5), 1568-1574. doi: 1510.1542/peds 2005-0187
4. Schreier, A., Wolke, D., Thomas, K., Horwood, J., Hollis, C., Gunnell, D... & Harrison, G. (2009). Prospective study of peer victimization in childhood and psychotic symptoms in a nonclinical population at age 12 years. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 66 (5), 527-536. doi: [10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2009.23](https://doi.org/10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2009.23)
5. Fisher, H. L., Moffitt, T. E., Houts, R. M., Belsky, D. W., Arseneault, L., & Caspi, A. (2012). Bullying victimization and risk of self harm in early adolescence: Longitudinal cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 344(May 5), 1-9.
6. Vreeman, R. C., & Carroll, A. E. (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 161, 78-88.
7. Merrell, K. W., Gueldner, B. A., Ross, S. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008). How effective are school bullying intervention programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(1), 26-42. doi: 10.1037/1045-3830.1023.1031.1026
8. Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2011). Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: A systematic and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 7(1), 27-56. doi:10.1007/s11292-11010-19109-11291
9. McDowell, D. J., & Parke, R. D. (2009). Parental correlates of children's peer relations: An empirical test of a tripartite model. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(1), 224-235. doi: 210.1037/a0014305
10. Cook, C. R., Williams, K. R., Guerra, N. G., Kim, T. E., & Sadek, S. (2010) Predictors of bullying and victimization in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic investigation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 25(2), 65-83. doi: 10.1037/a0020149.
11. Graziano, P. A., Keane, S. P., & Calkins, S. D. (2010). Maternal behaviour and children's early emotion regulation skills differentially predict development of children's reactive control and later effortful control. *Infant and Child Development*, 19(4), 333-353. doi: 10.1002/icd.670
12. Bowes, L., Maughan, B., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., & Arseneault, L. (2010). Families promote emotional and behavioural resilience to bullying: Evidence of an environmental effect. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(7), 809-817. doi: 810.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02216.x.
13. Reijntjes, A., Kamphuis, J. H., Prinzie, P., & Telch, M. J. (2010). Peer victimization and internalizing problems in children: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34(4), 244-252. doi:210.1016/j.chiabu.2009.1007.1009
14. Spence, S. H., De Young, A., Toon, C., & Bond, S. (2009). Longitudinal examination of the associations between emotional dysregulation, coping responses to peer provocation, and victimisation in children. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 61(3), 145-155. doi: 10.1080/00049530802259076

15. Healy, K. L., Sanders, M. R., & Iyer, A. (2015a). Facilitative parenting and children's social, emotional and behavioral adjustment. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(6), 1762-1779. doi: 10.1007/s10826-014-9980-x
16. Healy, K. L. & Sanders, M.R. (in press, accepted 15th February 2018). Mechanisms through which supportive relationships with parents and peers mitigate victimization, depression and internalizing problems in children bullied by peers. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*
17. Healy, K.L. & Sanders, M.R. (in press). Resilience Triple P Facilitators Manual. Triple P International
18. Healy, K. L., & Sanders, M. R. (2014). Randomized controlled trial of a family intervention for children bullied by peers. *Behavior therapy*, 45(6), 760-777. doi: 10.1016/j.beth.2014.06.001.